

REMARKS

Claims 2, 11 and 18 have been examined. The Examiner has rejected the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of a newly cited reference, i.e., U.S. Patent No. 5,634,208 to Nishikawa et al. ("Nishikawa"). Also, the Examiner has rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

I. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

The Examiner has rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. Without conceding to the Examiner's comments, Applicant hereby cancels claim 18 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 18 is now moot.

Applicant respectfully requests that the cancellation of claim 18 be entered for purposes of Appeal.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 2, 11 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,634,208 to Nishikawa et al. ("Nishikawa").

A. Claim 2

Applicant submits that claim 2 is patentable over the cited reference. For example, claim 2 recites a signal line, a ground plate, and another signal line disposed on an opposite side of the ground plate as the signal line. A plurality of through holes are formed in the ground plate along

a longitudinal direction of the signal line. Furthermore, the plurality of through holes are arranged in a matrix having at least two rows and at least two columns.

The Examiner asserts that Figure 30 of Nishikawa discloses that a plurality of through holes is arranged in a matrix having at least two rows and two columns (pg. 4 of Office Action). Applicant respectfully traverses this assertion. For example, the slits of Nishikawa are not arranged in a matrix. In Nishikawa, the slits 41 are arranged two-dimensionally in a ground metal 4 as shown, for example, in Figures 30 and 31. Nishikawa employs such an arrangement because a signal line, which is formed by connecting transmission lines 62-64 in series, is formed in a meander-like shape (Figs. 30 and 31). When focusing on a part of the signal line, it can be considered that only a single slit is arranged. That is, when viewing along the signal line of Nishikawa, it is equivalent to focusing on only a single slit in an area affected by the signal line (i.e., an area in which the characteristic impedance of the signal line is varied due to the slit). Therefore, it can be considered that only a single slit is provided for the signal line of Nishikawa.

In contrast, the invention recited in claim 2 employs the structure in which a plurality of through holes are arranged in a matrix. Therefore, even if focusing on a part of a signal line, a plurality of through holes, arranged in a matrix, are present within an area in which the characteristic of the signal line is determined. With the structure in which a plurality of through holes are arranged in a matrix, it is possible to reduce the capacitance between a signal line and a ground plate.

At least based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that claim 2 is patentable over the cited reference.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Application No. 09/664,094

B. Claims 11 and 18

Since claims 11 and 18 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicant submits that the rejection of such claims is now moot.

Applicant respectfully requests that the cancellation of claims 11 and 18 be entered for purposes of Appeal.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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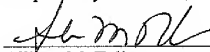
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